Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method for selecting a contact path between a member of an organization and a target individual, the method comprising:

tracking network communications of the members of the organization;

analyzing the level of interaction between the members of the organization based on the network communications;

selecting a contact path between a selected member of the organization and the target individual, the contact path including one or more members of the organization having at least a predetermined level of interaction with the selected member and the target individual.

2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

modeling the people network of the organization as a directed graph having plural nodes representing members of the organization and plural edges representing levels of interaction between members of the organization;

wherein analyzing the level of interaction comprises analyzing the edges associated with the selected member and the target individual.

3. The method of Claim 2 wherein each edge comprises one or more weights, each weight representing a level of interaction for one type of network communication.

4. The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight represents the level of interaction for e-mail communication.

5. The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight represents the level of interaction for instant messenger communication.

6. The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight represents the level of interaction for telephone communication.

7. The method of Claim 2 further comprising:

storing one or more areas of expertise for plural members of the organization; and

identifying an area of expertise desired by the selected member of the organization;

wherein the contact path comprises one or more members of the organization that represent a proposed path through the people network for the selected member to contact a member of the organization having the desired expertise.

8. The method of Claim 7 wherein:

selecting a contact path further comprises selecting plural contact paths, each contact path representing a proposed path through the people network for the selected member to contact a member of the organization having the desired expertise.

9. The method of Claim 8 further comprising graphically depicting the plural contact paths as nodes representing members of the organization and edges representing the level of interaction between the members, each node and edge having an appearance that corresponds to the strength of the contact path.

10. A system for determining a people network representation of an organization, the system comprising:

a communications network operable to exchange communications between plural members of the organization;

a people network model module interfaced with the communications network and operable to model communications of the communications network; and

an interaction level analyzer module interfaced with the people network model module and operable to apply a model of the communications to the level of interaction of the plural members to determine a people network representation.

11. The system of Claim 10 further comprising a graphical user interface operable to depict a visualization of the people network of a selected member of the organization.

12. The system of Claim 11 wherein the graphical user interface depicts the selected member's people network representation as plural nodes interfaced with edges, the nodes representing members of the network and the lines representing the level of interaction between the members.

13. The system of Claim 11 wherein the graphical user interface depicts the selected member's people network representation as a bullseye having the selected member at the center and members of the organization distributed in successive rings representing the level of interaction with the selected member.

14. The system of Claim 10 wherein the people network model module is further operable to model the people network of the organization as a directed graph having plural nodes and edges, the nodes representing members of the organization and the edges representing the level of interaction between nodes.

15. The system of Claim 10 further comprising a target locator module interfaced with the people network model and the interaction level analyzer module, the target locator module operable to accept a query from a selected member for members of the organization having a desired expertise and to provide the selected member with one or more target individuals based on the desired expertise and the level of interaction of the selected member with members of the organization.

16. The system of Claim 15 wherein the target locator module is further operable to provide target individuals using a shortest path determination to prioritize target individuals in order of strongest contact path with the selected member.

17. A method for determining a target individual having expertise in a subject matter of interest to a selected member of an organization, the method comprising:

identifying members of the organization having expertise in the subject matter;

selecting as target individuals only the identified members having at least a predetermined level of interaction with the selected member; and

providing the selected member with contact paths to the target individuals.

18. The method of Claim 17 wherein selecting as target individuals further comprises identifying members having contact paths of less than a predetermined number of intervening members between the target individual and the selected member.

19. The method of Claim 17 wherein providing the selected member with contact paths comprises:

modeling a people network of the organization based on communications of members of the organization across a network; and

determining the contact paths by analyzing the level of interaction between members of the organization.

20. The method of Claim 19 wherein modeling a people network comprises representing the people network as a directed graph having a node for each member of the organization, the nodes interfaced by edges representing levels of interaction.

21. The method of Claim 20 wherein the communications network supports plural type of communication and wherein each edge has a set of weights, each type of communication having an associated weight.

22. The method of Claim 19 wherein the communications comprise e-mail communications.

23. The method of Claim 19 wherein the communications comprise instant message communications.

24. The method of Claim 19 wherein the communications comprise phone communications.

25. The method of Claim 19 wherein determining the contact paths comprises performing a strongest path analysis using the people network model to prioritize target individuals.